

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Bent River Machine Inc.

Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Value Stream Mapping Cuts 75 Percent of Process Time

Client Profile:

Bent River Machine, Inc., was formed in 1978 in Clarkdale, Arizona. The company has over 20 employees and serves an international clientele with outstanding service, product design and manufacturing operations.

Situation:

Bent River Machine has a dual business model. One part of the company designs and builds customized automation machines. The second part of the business builds machine parts for the automation group and also for outside customers. While the automation machine business serves customers internationally, the business of machining parts is largely a domestic operation. In the past, the front office process for machined parts has taken an average of 28 days. Bent River Machine wanted to reduce their paperwork process time to dramatically increase their competitiveness to a world class level and turned to the Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Arizona MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

The Arizona MEP led a cross-functional core team of company executives and operators through an exercise using a structured process mapping system. This training and planning tool allowed Bent River Machine to clearly and completely understand the current process time and tasks. The Arizona MEP lean experts then facilitated a hands-on brainstorming and "trystorming" session to immediately eliminate all possible waste in their process. The Bent River Machine team selected wastes to eliminate right away and identified additional waste that could also be eliminated in the future.

Results:

- * Reduced approval loop from 3 days to 15 minutes.
- * Eliminated complex set of scheduling tasks.
- * Reduced front office process time from 28 days to 7 days.
- * Saved \$40,000 in annual costs.
- * Increased sales by \$750,000.
- * Retained 4 jobs.

Testimonial:

"Scott Kurish and Edgar Allen of the Arizona MEP are exceptionally knowledgeable lean experts. I particularly appreciated their ability to relate to all the various members of our plant team and encourage their ideas. This training and implementation gave us the opportunity to look analytically at our process, see it for what it was and slash the waste and redundancy. Edgar and Scott's coaching allowed us to significantly decrease the turn-around time for our customers and increase our service in

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this area to world-class status. These gentleman are witty, positive, and kind as they helped us roll back the reality of our process to illuminate the waste and ridiculousness of what we were doing. Their kind humor and defined process allowed us to reduce and improve our process and feel empowered and capable while we did it. Their coaching is still reverberating through our company-- they are true catalysts for improvement and change!"

Norela Harrington, President and Owner